

## Expanding the army in the fight against burn scars



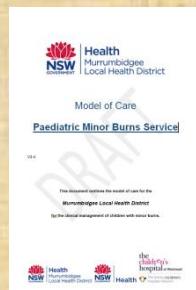
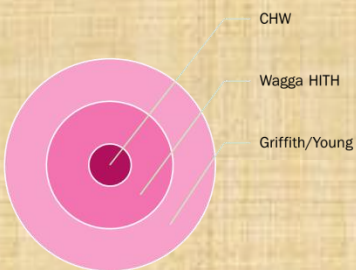
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### Background

In 2016 >25% of children attending The Children's Hospital Westmead (CHW) burns unit lived outside of Sydney, resulting in increased travel time, cost and family disruption.



In the Murrumbidgee LHD, a joint initiative with the NSW Ministry of Health and CHW has developed a structured and supported rollout of services providing collaborative management for these children known as the Murrumbidgee telehealth project.

This project utilises a spoke and hub service model alongside a collaborative model of care; resulting in up-skilling local staff and enablement of local supported management of minor burn injuries.



### Results

Significant education and up-skilling of local nursing staff has enabled the rollout of this structured model focussing on the acute burn care phase. In 2017, 82 patients were referred to CHW from Murrumbidgee, with 95% of these able to remain locally for treatment.



An example of a toddler palmar contact burn and the specialised extension soft-casting developed by the CHW physiotherapy team. The Wagga allied health team have attended to be educated in these management techniques.

*"I was with a mum ...in Wagga Wagga in the burns unit; a little baby, Junior...who is 10 months old, and his mum, Angela. I was talking about this sort of issue because normally a little baby like Junior, who had burned his right hand falling into his grandparents' fireplace, would have to be transported to Westmead Children's. The methodology that is now being used—which the mum, Angela, was saying was just unbelievable for her—was that there are nurses and others trained at Wagga Wagga in their burns unit, and if they need specialist help on any particular issues, they were doing it through digital connection back to the Westmead children's." Hon. BRAD HAZZARD Minister for Health (NSW) 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 2018*

### Discussion:

The project has highlighted that investment in the acute phase of rural burn injury management, to date, has not been reciprocated in scar management and rehabilitation, resulting in limited capability and capacity to manage burn injury scars outside of CHW.

Local allied health outreach strategies are being formulated to address not only the geographical barriers, but additional financial and social factors which impact on a family's ability to engage in a successful therapy program. Murrumbidgee LHD Allied Health staff have attended for specialist on-site training at CHW and have remote access to this expertise for ongoing support. The use of video-link for scar management clinics is also being explored.

### Conclusion

Specialist expertise is required in the treatment of paediatric burn injury and scar prevention and management.

The Murrumbidgee telehealth project has supported local burn management. More formal collaborative processes to include allied-health staff engagement to deliver ongoing scar management and join the fight against scarring requires further investigation.

### Acknowledgements

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### Further information

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The Wagga allied health team attending on-site training with the CHW burns physiotherapists

